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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President of Russia (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Interpreter: Peter Afanasenko

Notetakers: Jill Sandler, Clark Lystra, Don
Gentile, Tina Yarmchuk, Peter Clement, Hope
Harrison, Jonathan Elkind

DATE, TIME January 31, 2001, 9:02-9:17 a.m., EST
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Mr. President, it is my honor to talk to you, sir. I appreciate you taking my phone call, and I know this is going to be the first of many conversations we will have. (U)

President Putin: Mr. President, I am glad to be able to talk to you on the phone and to congratulate you on your election as President of the United States. I followed how you competed courageously and correctly, and I congratulate you on the results. (U)

The President: Thank you very much. Mr. President, I look forward to establishing a personal relationship with you. They tell me you are a candid and straightforward person. I think you will find that I am candid and straightforward as well, which means we will have some interesting conversations. Of course, they will be constructive. (U)

President Putin: I also think so. I agree with your assessment. I remember what you said about that journalist. I heard your assessment of him. It may not have been a good thing to do, but I applauded you secretly. (U)

The President: The only thing I don't want to do is get into a karate contest with you. (U)

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Reason: 1.5(d)
Declassify on: 2/2/11

President Putin: Maybe you would succeed. I practice judo, which is a different kind of sport. But looking at you, I conclude you are a very athletic person. I do not know your team very well, but I know Mr. Baker. I met him in St. Petersburg a few years ago, when he was working in the Administration of your father. I would not say he looks younger now, but he is just as professional. If you have such professional people on your team, I'm sure we will find common ground and have good relationships. (U)

The President: Mr. President, I think I have the best national security team ever assembled, and I would tell that to my father. Colin Powell you know, and Condoleezza Rice speaks fluent Russian, and she is talking today or tomorrow with one of your high-ranking officials that you have sent here. I think you will find that this is an Administration that speaks plainly. I am a businessman. I believe in the rule of law. We will be discussing democracy and issues such as free press, but you will be dealing with a very professional group of people who recognizes that yours is a very important country and recognizes the importance of us having good relations. (U)

President Putin: I agree. I have read your letter, Mr. President. I think it calls for additional scrutiny. However, the approaches covered in this letter are an acceptable basis for the development of our relations. We can say a few words about the agenda of Russian-American relations. I know you attached a lot of attention to issues of strategic stability. We will have to work quickly to overcome our disagreement regarding missile defense. However, I am absolutely convinced that there is no impasse. There is an opportunity to find a solution. I fully share your concern about proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technologies. I believe there are opportunities to expand relationships between our two countries as far as the economy is concerned. Our economy is on the rise right now, which is a good message to our American partners. Mr. Ivanov, our Foreign Minister, has already talked to Mr. Powell. As far as I know, they have explored possible times for our first contacts already. I hope they will be able to arrange it. I hope we will be able to find time for a personal meeting with you, Mr. President. I know that Ms. Condi Rice will be in touch with the Secretary of our Security Council, Mr. Ivanov, to develop their relationship. There has been another channel of relations between our countries, contact between the Chairman of the Russian Federation and the Vice President of the United States. We should consider whether to let this channel die out or whether we will resuscitate it. (S)

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The President: Mr. President, I appreciate that. My inclination is to let it die out and make sure we have a strong relationship between you and me and our security people. We have a lot to discuss. I look forward to it. I am anxious to sit down with you personally. I know you are a strong man with your country's interests at heart. I appreciate that. I will assure you of two things. First, my deep desire to restructure our nuclear relations, both on the offensive as well as the defensive side. Secondly, I will treat you with the utmost respect, as the leader of a very important nation. (S)

President Putin: Thank you, Mr. President. There is a lot of information about you in our media now, so I know a lot about how you used to live and how you reached the post of President of the United States. Now I have an idea what kind of man Texas raises.. (U)

The President: I appreciate that we have a lot of work to do, sir, and I look forward to seeing you soon. (U)

President Putin: Thank you very much, Mr. President. In conclusion, I would like to make one minor remark. You know that the United States, on the instruction of the Swiss Prosecutor's Office, has detained Mr. Borodin. He is an official, a civil servant, and the Secretary of the Belarussian Union. We believe this is primarily a legal issue and not a political issue. However, you have probably heard that in Russia, there is very strong public feedback regarding this. We hope that there will be a solution that will address both the legal and human aspects of the problem. However, the most important thing is the security relationship between our countries. I hope in the near future we will establish personal contacts. I will start to know you personally and start developing relations between our countries. Thank you very much for this call. (S)

The President: Thank you, sir. One quick point. The matter you brought up is a matter of law, and we will do our best to assist the extradition. Mr. President, I really appreciate this. I am so honored that you received my call. This is a very important and positive call. I look forward to knowing you personally. Thank you. Goodbye, sir. (U)

President Putin: We shall be in touch. Thank you very much, Mr. President. (U)

The President: Bye. (U)

President Putin: Bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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THE WHITE HOUSE

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President of Russia (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Interpreter: Nikolai Sorokin

Notetakers: Jill Sandler, Ed Padinske,
Don Cheramie, Tina Yarmchuk, Mark Pekala

DATE, TIME: May 1, 2001, 07:38 - 07:50 a.m., EDT
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Mr. President, thank you so much for taking my call on your nation's holiday. (U)

President Putin: I am glad to hear from you, Mr. President, and I hope you and your family are doing well. (U)

The President: Thank you. I am looking forward to seeing you. Our staffs are working hard so that you and I can have a good visit. (S)

President Putin: Yes, that would be a very good idea. I will be very glad to meet you personally, and I hope the foreign ministers will be able to arrange this. (S)

The President: Yes, I am very anxious for this to happen as well. (S)

President Putin: Also, thank you, Mr. President, for receiving Mr. Gorbachev and the Vice President, Mr. Cheney, for receiving our Vice Premier, Mr. Kudrin. This will help prepare our meeting. (S)

The President: By the way, Mr. Gorbachev said very positive things about you. (S)

President Putin: I have good relations with him. (S)

The President: Let me tell you why I am calling, Mr. President. In about six hours, I am giving a speech about establishing a new vision on how to keep the peace in the world. It is a speech

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that says we need to consult with our friends, allies, and major countries such as Russia, about how to set up a new framework to deal with the missile threat. It is the beginning to a serious dialogue between Russia and the United States about how to best address the 1972 ABM treaty. In my speech, I do not make any unilateral decisions. It is very much a reflection of your sentiments and the statements you have made in the past, including about limited systems capable of intercepting launches at boost phase. So, I am calling because I didn't want to surprise you, and secondly, because I assure you that our nation will consult with people in Europe as well as yourself. (S)

President Putin: Thank you, Mr. President. You know, in general, our position on this matter. We will always emphasize that we are prepared to interact with the United States on strategic stability and work together on reducing nuclear arsenals. You know I share your concerns about potential threats, and we are prepared to look for means to counter these threats. We should do this in a non-confrontational manner and not destroy the structure of the arms control framework that has been sealed for the last 30 years. Mr. President, we shall study closely your statement today. I believe that when Foreign Minister Ivanov meets with Secretary of State Mr. Powell on May 18, we shall be able to present our position. I believe this problem, like other problems, will form a good basis for our interaction. We have made good progress in Nagorno-Karabakh, and I thank you for your message after the meeting of the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia. I would also like to inform you about my meeting with President Mubarak of Egypt. On April 27, he was in Moscow, and we had a lengthy discussion about the Middle East problem. I believe that the initiative they have proposed together with Jordan is a good one. This initiative would form a basis for the settlement, at least for a cessation of violence, although we know it has already been a long conflict, and it will be very difficult to find a solution within a very short time. We expect soon a visit from the Israeli Foreign Minister and later probably a visit by the President of Syria to Moscow. I believe this is one of the problems we should address together. I believe we could make a joint contribution towards finding a solution to the Middle East. If we could have a meeting it would be very good, as I could tell you about the responses of the people I mentioned. If not, I shall call you and tell you about these meetings. Anyway, I thank you for this call, and I wish you all the best. (S)

The President: Thank you, Mr. President. I am so honored to have talked to you today. In my speech today, I will make it clear that Russia is not an enemy; it is a country that we need to talk and cooperate with. Our conversation today proves my point. We will work together on the Middle East. I thank you

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(for your update. You are playing a very useful role, and I know the people in the Middle East are grateful that you are working with them. I hope our schedules will permit us to meet as soon as possible. I am very much looking forward to it. Thank you for taking my call. (U)

President Putin: Thank you, Mr. President, and all the best for you and your family. (U)

The President: Thank you, Mr. President, and we will see you soon. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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